

is still growing, new names being enrolled each Sunday. I am confident that when we get installed into our new church our Sunday School will soon reach the one hundred mark.

The alteration which were necessary in our church are nearing completion. The painting and decorating is done and the carpet is ready to be put down, and I believe all that remains to be done is the building of the baptistery and enlarging the platform. From present indications it looks as tho we will be all settled by the middle of next month, when we look forward to a grand dedication ceremony. This is the first time since the Annual Conference that I have written for the Evangelist, so I wish to state here that I never shall forget it. It was the greatest gathering it has ever been my good fortune to attend, and I am sure those many splendid meetings were the cause of bringing me nearer to Almighty God, and with God's help I shall attend next year's conference in company with my entire family. I will now close with kind remembrance to the many friends I met at the Winona Lake, and I humbly solicit the prayers of all for our Mission.

WILLIAM STRIDIRON.

The Sunday School

LESSON 5, November 3, 1901

The Death of Joseph.—Genesis 50: 15-26.

Golden Text—So teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts unto wisdom.—Psa. 90:12.

Lesson Thought.—Past sins are a real source of trouble, real forgiveness, however, is also forgetfulness of the past.

Introduction.—With this lesson we come to the close of the studies in the life and character of Joseph. By commandment of Pharaoh Joseph ordered his brothers to bring Jacob and their families to Egypt. It was hard for Jacob to believe that his beloved son was yet alive but when he saw the wagons and the gifts which he sent him, he at once began preparations to go to Egypt. Joseph met the tribe in the land of Goshen, and presented five of his brothers to Pharaoh who now told them that they should have the best the land could afford. Jacob was introduced to Pharaoh who received him with honor and Jacob blessed him. He lived in Egypt seventeen years, and shortly before his death he made Joseph promise that he would bury him in the land of his fathers. After his death his remains were followed with great honors to Canaan where he was buried in the cave of Machpelah. The incidents in verses 15-21 of today's lessons probably took place soon after the funeral.

Meaning and Application of the Text

15 And when Joseph's brethren saw that their father was dead, they said, Joseph will peradventure hate us, and will certainly requite us all the evil which we did unto him.

Note, (1) Joseph's brethren had not forgotten their sin against him tho it was now above two score years since they sold him. Tho they had abundant evidence of a complete forgiveness, yet did their consciences trouble them. (2) Probably the heinousness of their sin never occurred to them as it did after their father's death when they were made to think of the sorrow and the trouble they brought to the old man's heart. (3) They feared that Joseph would not avenge himself of the evil they did him. (4) It was not Joseph's attitude toward them that brought this feeling, but rather

er the guilt in their own hearts. Some lessons: (1) Sin is a terrible factor in human life. Some day it will come home to those who permit it to have its own way. How it does cling to one. More than forty years had passed away since that sin was committed, yet it fresh in their minds and they are unhappy without the positive assurance of perfect forgiveness. (2) The only way to escape the consequences of sin is to get rid of sin itself, and that must be done in God's own appointed way. Jesus only can save us from our sins.

16 And they sent a messenger unto Joseph, saying, Thy father did command before he died, saying,

17 So shall ye say unto Joseph, Forgive, I pray thee now, the trespass of thy brethren, and their sin; for they did unto thee evil: and now, we pray thee, forgive the trespass of the servants of the God of thy father. And Joseph wept when they spake unto him.

18 And his brethren also went and fell down before his face; and they said, Behold, we be thy servants.

The messenger may have been Benjamin who had no part in the sin and who would have the greatest influence with Joseph. It is no where recorded that Jacob ever had such a communication with his sons, tho the statement may be true. The frank acknowledgement of their sin would indicate that they were truly penitent. Joseph was deeply affected and pained because they should have for a moment doubted the sincerity and the reality of his attitude toward them. Lessons: (1) Sin makes cowards of people. They were afraid to go to Joseph themselves at first so they sent a messenger. It is hard to face those whom we have wronged. How dare the sinner face God whose laws he has disregarded for a whole life time? (2) If we would have forgiveness we must come to the Lord Jesus as these brethren came to Joseph, in deep penitence, acknowledging our sins and plead for mercy. (3) The prodigal son too was willing to be only a servant in the old home if the father will permit him to enter. (4) It is safe to say that it was the death of Jacob that brought Joseph's brethren so close to him. Many times indeed are the members of a family brought together beside the coffin of one of their dear ones. Death very often has a very softening tendency, bringing loved ones even closer together. Husband and wife sometimes find their sweetest happiness when sorrow has touched them. And so the breaking up of the family circle here may be the means of reuniting them in heaven. (5) These brothers are suffering terribly for the sin against their brother. To sin against another is an awful thing, but to sin against a brother is worse. It may cost many bitter tears. Such sins may be healed by penitence and forgiveness but they can never be undone, the scars will remain forever. The only sensible thing to do is to keep sin out of one's life.

19 And Joseph said unto them, Fear not: for am I in the place of God?

20 But as for you, ye thought evil against me; but God meant it unto good, to bring to pass, as it is this day, to save much people alive.

21 Now therefore fear ye not: I will nourish you, and your little ones. And he comforted them, and spake kindly unto them.

In the first place Joseph comforts his brothers by informing them that the punishment of sin belongs to God. So they need not fear him. If there is any punishment to be dealt out he will not do that; it is the prerogative of God. Joseph does not attempt to explain away their sin, or to make them feel that they were not guilty. He admits their guilt, but comforts them in the way God brought good out of it. Instead of punishment he promised them help and forgiveness. Lessons: (1) Even the best of us may well sit at the feet of Joseph and learn the sweet lesson of forgiveness as exemplified in his life. Tho he lived seventeen centuries before the coming of Christ yet he seems to have learned the whole teaching of Christianity so many years before. It is a lesson all of us need to learn, our attitude toward those who have wronged us and done us much harm. Not only is there a lesson here for individuals but for nations also. (2) It is a beautiful thought that all the wrong that was done to Joseph did not hurt him any. His lot

was at times hard to bear, but he bore it nobly, and his character was the sweeter for the humiliation which he endured. We have heard of flowers that grow under the snow in the winter and when the spring days come and the snow melts, they spring forth fragrant and sweet, unhurt by the cold winter's snow. So it was that Joseph came thru his trials, and so it is that every Christian may come forth from the severest trials and persecutions, the sweeter and more beautiful for the injustice and the wrong he suffered.

22 And Joseph dwelt in Egypt, he, and his father's house: and Joseph lived an hundred and ten years.

23 And Joseph saw Ephraim's children of the third generation: the children also of Machir the son of Manasseh were brought up upon Joseph's knees.

24 And Joseph said unto his brethren, I die: and God will surely visit you, and bring you out of this land unto the land which he sware to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob.

25 And Joseph took an oath of the children of Israel, saying, God will surely visit you, and ye shall carry up my bones from hence.

Joseph lived yet fifty-six years after the death and burial of his father. Joseph adopted the children referred to in verse 23 as his own children, as soon as they were born and cared for them. He promised that the Lord would visit them, not in judgement, but in mercy. Already the deliverance at the hand of Moses is here promised. The oath of Joseph was kept, for when the time of the exodus came they carried up Joseph's coffin with them. (Ex. 15:19.) It was safely kept thru all the wandering in Egypt and at last buried in Shechem. The hand of providence is plainly seen thru all the events in the life of Joseph, and even after his death.

26 So Joseph died, being an hundred and ten years old: and they embalmed him, and he was put in a coffin in Egypt.

He was placed in a mummy case, probably made of wood. Thus ended the career of a wonderful life; in all the Old Testament there is not to be found a character more beautiful than that of Joseph. Even in his dying words there was noble faith. He thought of Canaan, and there his body was to rest. In Egypt he lived more than ninety years, but that was not his home. So the Christian's home is in heaven; he does not expect to remain here; he is a pilgrim and stranger, but he has faith in God, and some day he expects to live with him in the land of pure delights. No matter how happy we may be here, this is not our abiding place. We seek another country, even a heavenly; that shall be our final home, eternally with God the Father and his son Jesus Christ.

Terse Teachings

Sin makes cowards of men and women.

There is happiness only in the assurance of forgiveness.

God is able to bring good out of evil.

The secret of all success is faithfulness.

It is ours to forgive, not to punish.

God is ever ready to forgive our sins.

We must repent if we want to be forgiven.

To Make You Think

(1) What do you think would have been the result if Joseph had not been sold into Egypt? (2) What made his brothers think that Joseph had not forgiven them? (3) May we know that we have been forgiven, and if so how? (4) Does forgiveness remove the consequences of sin? (5) What is included and what is not included in forgiveness? (6) What is there singularly beautiful in the dying words of Joseph?

Little self denials, little honesties, little passing words of sympathy, little nameless acts of kindness, little silent victories over favorite temptations—these are the silent threads of gold which, when woven together, gleam out so brightly in the pattern of life which God approves.—Dean Farrar.